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WILLIAM SAMUEL ELIOT

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WILLIAM SAMUEL ELIOT

1854–1874

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THE friends who receive this sketch are asked to regard it as a letter written in answer to many requests for some memorial of the life and character which it attempts to describe.

"And the book of Holy Writ,
Again unfolded, passage clear shall yield
To heights more glorious still, and into shades
More awful, where, advancing hand in hand,
We may be taught, O Darling of our care,
To calm the affections, elevate the soul,
And consecrate our lives to truth and love."

WORDSWORTH.

WILLIAM SAMUEL ELIOT was born in Boston, March 16, 1854. William was the name of both his grandfathers, William H. Eliot and William F. Otis, and that of his uncle, William P. Eliot. Samuel was the name of his great-grandfather, his great-uncle, Samuel A. Eliot, and his father. He was baptized May 22.

His birthplace was his grandfather Otis's residence, 1 Louisburg Square, and there he passed the greater part of his infancy. There, too, he did his first work, unconscious but full of influence, in bringing light into his family. His grandfather, who had borne great sorrows, and lived under their shadow in patient retirement, seemed to come back to active habits and to find fresh pleasures, as he played with

this little child. His grandmother Eliot's experience was just the same. The first summer was spent at her house in Brookline, and when he returned to town in the autumn, she followed him and took lodgings in a neighboring house, that she might not lose his sunshine. Grandparents, parents, and all the near kindred watched the unfolding infancy, the beautiful countenance, the peculiarly beautiful smile, the healthy frame, the joyous movement, the first words uttered in a voice remarkable among children's voices for its melody; and, with still greater hope, the sweet temper and the active mind, which gave the best promise of a bright and happy future. It was a very bright and happy present, and the baby changed into the little boy with scarce a break in the flying time. The summers of 1855 and 1856 were passed at Nahant, in the same house where the last two summers of his life glided away. It is strange now to con-

trast the activity of the earlier with the stillness of the later years, the thoughtless vivacity of the child who played there with the quiet self-control of the young man who suffered there, and think that it was the same being.

In the autumn of 1856 he was taken to Hartford, where his father entered upon a professorship in Trinity College. Thither his grandmother followed, to reside with her son, and there his sister Emily, his Valentine, as she was called, was born February 14, 1857. He was very loyal to her from the beginning. One little incident is remembered; as they were together one day, she cried, when he instantly left his play, running "to amoose her," and he was almost always equally loving. The house in Trinity Street was a small one, but its open grounds, and the much larger college grounds opposite, gave plenty of play room. He loved play of every sort with all his heart. His out-door sports

began in Hartford, and when he could coast by himself, being four years old, he was very much puffed up. As for study, he showed the smallest possible inclination towards it. His father and mother divided his lessons between them, and did their best to teach him, and to make him like to be taught. But it went hard with him; sometimes with his feet tied to the chair, sometimes sent into a closet, or more severely punished; for every five minutes of study he seemed to have ten of resistance. "When I've learned to read," he told his mother, "I won't read." He had no greater liking for accomplishments. When sent to dancing-school, he said, "I wish I was one of Dr. Wells's poor boys." If he made a false step, as he often did, he would look at his mother and blush, though he was not over-sensitive generally. One day, as he was reading to his mother, he did not know a word which he had read before, and when she looked reproachfully

at him, he suddenly exclaimed, "I am not ashamed of myself." When his father said to him, "I hope I shall bring you up a gentleman," he replied, "Then I guess you'll have to spank me and put me in the closet." These are but a very few of his early sayings which are remembered, and even these would not be repeated but for the glimpses they give of his character.

His grandfather came to see him once or twice in Hartford, and he went twice to Boston, in 1856 and 1857; but in the early summer of the latter year his grandfather sailed for Europe, and died at Versailles in May, 1858. It was the first great loss which befell Willy, and young as he was, he felt it. He could not but feel it, for his grandfather's devotion to him had been complete, and the love which it inspired was very strong. The empty place was taken by his aunt Mary, who came to live with us until her marriage, and who seemed to inherit her father's passionate attach-

ment to the boy. His grandmother continued beneath the same roof, and his father's sister was often there, though not habitually resident until a later time. Kindred and friends came on visits, and among them the great-grandmother, Mrs. Marshall, between whom and Willy there was a very close bond. "I 've two grandmas," he said; "I wish I had three." He could not have expressed his affection for the two more strongly. His attachment to other relations was kept up by frequent journeys to Boston, generally in winter, but sometimes at other seasons, during the whole Hartford period. The summers of 1857 and 1858 were passed at Easthampton, on the southern shore of Long Island, where the shady roads and the long sunshiny beach knew no more active rider or walker or bather than he. In 1859 and 1860 he was carried to Newport, where he was in the immediate neighborhood of some of his dearest kindred.

Before this, however, he had entered a new phase, intellectually. From his fifth birthday he began to show the taste for learning which was the strong characteristic of after years. Restless limbs and wandering thoughts yielded gradually to the charm, and when he passed from mere rudiments to something higher, and entered upon the study of French, as he did when six years old, he and his lessons became in time the best of friends. He was very fond of his Sunday lessons, and went on from one to another without a trace of formality or cant, until he grew, at a comparatively early age, to be familiar with all that it was reasonable to expect him to know in the Bible and the Prayer Book. When he joined a Sunday-school class at Newport, he took the lead of it at once, although he was the youngest, or one of the youngest, and had never been to Sunday-school before. One of the teachers of that school thought him the brightest child of

his years she had ever met. He went to a week-day school for the first time in the autumn of 1860, and got on as well as his high spirits would allow him, but of all his reports that have been preserved, only one includes him among "those who have no errors." He made up at home for his short-comings at school, partly by studies such as French and Latin, but far more by faithful efforts to do right, which though often interrupted were always maintained, and with increasing success. He was straightforward and truthful, courageous and enduring, most affectionate to all about him, and the very sweetest-tempered creature known to his nearest friends. He could be irritated, but the irritation never lasted; he could be angered, but the anger vanished not merely as the sun went down, but as the moment passed away. His besetting infirmities were such as belonged to his age — self-consciousness, argumentativeness, and rudeness; but they gave no

anxiety to his parents, who thought them the passing shadows that they proved to be.

The summer of 1861 was spent at Nahant. At its close, September 2, his brother George was born in Hartford, and the fresh claim upon Willy was lovingly met. The summers of 1862 and 1863 took him to Nahant, and to more distant places, as Seavy's Island near Portsmouth, N. H., and Chappaqua and West Point, N. Y. These journeys were delightful to him and to those who journeyed with him. They satisfied his activity, both of body and of mind, and gave him opportunities to be useful, particularly to his mother, sister, and brother, which he always seemed glad to use.

His mother's health failed in the autumn of 1863, and after vainly endeavoring to regain it at home, she was ordered abroad. It being arranged that Willy should accompany her and his father, while the

other two children remained with their grandmother and aunt, the Hartford household was broken up, never to be reunited, and the travellers left their dear ones behind them in January, 1864. Willy was then almost ten years old, and his departure divided his life into two nearly equal parts: childhood behind, boyhood and early manhood before.

We sailed from New York to Cadiz, and he shall describe our arrival. "On Wednesday (February 12)," he wrote his grandmother, "we got up at midnight to see the light on Cape St. Vincent. Thursday we sailed along the coast of Portugal, and heard a drum beating. Friday, at six o'clock, I got up to see Cadiz, as we went into the harbor. It was a splendid sight to see the city all black, but as soon as the sun rose, the city turned all white." In this far-away place he found a second home with his dear friends of the Picard and Fatio families, and the house being

full of maidens as ready for a frolic as himself, he had high times. The third day after his arrival, Cadiz celebrated her Sunday of Masks, and he was not only masked, but dressed as a girl, a character with which he was so much out of keeping, that the effect was, as he recorded it in his diary, "I scared my mother." He was rather scared himself, on going out-of-doors with some of the family, for the masks in the streets and squares seemed to divine that he did not belong to them, and teased him in a way to which he was wholly unaccustomed.

Several weeks passed. A day was given to Port St. Mary's; a longer time to Seville, where the ceremonies of Holy Week formed the setting in which he saw the Cathedral and its neighboring objects of beauty. Nothing interested him more than the ruins of Italica, its Roman associations being more familiar to him than any Spanish traditions; but he

plunged into all the sights with characteristic ardor. Then came sad news from home. The sister was dangerously ill, but recovered; the brother was ill, then alarmingly so, then dead. "I am so sorry for all of us," wrote Willy to his grandmother, "that dear Georgie has died; I am writing all that I can remember of what he said." He got a blank book, inscribed it "George's book," and then set to work on entering all the sayings and doings which he could recall. It begins thus: "I thought I would write all I can remember about my darling angel brother, and a few Hymns." It contains a good many paragraphs like this: "Whenever he did not want to play with me, I used to put my head against the wall and say, 'Billy sick, Dordy kiss Billy, Dordy make Billy well;' and he would look at me a moment with a feeling of compassion on his dear little face, and then come up to me, and throw his dear little arms about my neck, and kiss me, and say, 'Dear Billy,' as sweetly as possible."

From Cadiz we travelled through Spain, staying longer at Madrid than at any other place. His pleasure in the Madrid Gallery was really remarkable for a boy. "The Museo here," he begins a letter home, "is full of splendid pictures;" and he goes on to describe those he liked best, which, naturally enough, were some of the Murillos. Across the Pyrenees, and through France, we came to Paris, then went through Switzerland to Schwalbach in Nassau, where we stayed a month. Afterwards, descending the Rhine and passing through Belgium, we crossed to England, spending a little while in London and among the cathedrals and historic places of southern and central England, till we embarked at Liverpool for home. Through all this tour Willy enjoyed as much, and it seemed as intelligently, as his parents. He took delight in nature and in art; he appreciated the historical and the romantic features of every spot he visited; and whether climb-

ing a mountain, or going through a library, or worshipping in a cathedral, he was as equal to his opportunities as if he had been fifteen or twenty instead of ten. His father and mother both formed a higher opinion of his intellectual powers from their observations upon this journey. He was one of the most cheerful of companions. It was the last year of the Civil War, and its anxieties and sorrows were even greater abroad than at home. Not only were we far away from the movements in which we were most interested, but we were surrounded by strangers whose opinions had been formed against us, and whose sympathies went in very large proportion to our adversaries. Willy, who had been stanch all through the war, singing national songs, rejoicing in national victories, and hopeful through the darker times, was now full of sanguine patriotism, not because he was ignorant of the difficulties in which his country was involved, but because he

believed they would be overcome. He would sometimes speak out in a very fervent way among those who talked on the other side, so that he had to be checked, thankful as we were for his fervor.

We landed in Boston, September, 1864, and in October, while we were at Springfield in order to be near her, the dear grandmother, whose heart had been broken by the death of the grandson left at home and who lingered only to welcome the one returning to her, passed away. We came back to Boston to find lodgings for the winter, and to pass the following summer at Nahant and the autumn at Brookline. Willy entered the Latin School at the close of 1864, and was soon as deep in studies and sports as any Boston boy. In the autumn of 1865, just as we were preparing to take possession of a new home in Chestnut Street, he met with an alarming accident. Crossing the lower part of the Common, he was struck to the ground by a

ball, retaining his consciousness just long enough to say where his friends were to be found. A few days' rest proved sufficient to restore him, and he went back to his exercises with something like a veteran's feeling. In the spring of 1866 he was taken from school on account of the excessive pressure of his own eagerness rather than the demands of his teachers, and from this time until he entered college, he studied under his father. The summer of 1866 was passed at Lenox, among some of his dearest friends. With their children, he and his sister got up a very simple dramatic performance, of which the following note, signed by all the performers, and written by him, tells the story: —

"Dear Dr. Wells, — We acted a little play on Saturday called 'Old Poz,' to which a good many of our friends came. The price of tickets was twenty-five cents, but as a good many gave a great deal more, it came to thirty-one dollars, which we send you for your poor children."

The winter of 1866–67 was one of steady home work, except a week's visit by himself, the first independent expedition he ever made, to kind friends at Chicopee Falls. His diary, which he never kept up for many months at a time, has such entries as these: "January 3. In the afternoon I went cutting, and cut from Charles Street to Dock Square, and then through Federal Street to Summer Street, and then through Charles to Beacon, and then home. I then did my drawing." "February 13. I did an hour and a half's Latin, some history, and an hour's arithmetic. I recited all my lessons except my Latin exercise and history. I went down town and looked at some books, but did not get any. In the afternoon I played prisoners' base with the fellows. They beat one game, we beat the other. I went to Fred C——'s house. We played parlor croquet and read. I read nearly all the evening." "February 18. At half past four the carriage came to take

mamma, Emmy, and me to the Last Day" (written as if he were glad enough it was the last) "at dancing-school." "February 19. I saw a splendid postage-stamp album; it is an English one. I stayed in, this afternoon, to have my music lesson." "February 28. After dinner I went to look at Stafford and Smith's postage-stamp album, which I am to have for one of my birthday presents." Postage-stamps had long interested him, and his collections, continued for four or five years, had now become considerable. He never grew tired of adding to them, and was preparing a new order when his last long illness approached its close. Another pursuit of his own choice was astronomy. He began about the summer of 1867, which was spent in Manchester, with simple observations of the heavens, and afterwards went into really difficult studies. In such occupations he showed a great deal of perseverance as well as enthusiasm.

In the spring of 1868 he did some zealous work at the Cretan Fair. A month or two later he went on a long-looked-for visit to one of his kindest friends at Hartford, and its opening days were all enjoyment. But on the Fourth of July, in the early morning, a large fire-cracker exploded, striking him in the eye and rendering him for the time unconscious. All his fun was over, and pain, confinement, and darkness followed for several days. "I was sick," he wrote in his diary, "in a dark room all this week." That was all he had to say about it, and he bore his trouble with more than a boy's fortitude, and a great deal more than a boy's sweetness. As soon as it was safe, he was taken to Newport, and there he gradually recovered.

His diary for January 29, 1869, says, "I had an argument with R—— about public schools. I had one with him and G—— about the negro." It recalls the disputatious spirit which he showed at this time,

and which, but for his never-varying amiability, would have troubled us a good deal. Side by side with this development was another of a very different sort. His romantic nature began to appear, not at all strikingly, but in many ways not before observed. He concentrated his attachments, and invested their object for the time being with wonderful attractions, writing her name, generally in Greek characters, almost everywhere within reach, and keeping a record of meetings and words and even smiles. He did not talk about these things, they were far too deep for that; nor did he ever like to speak much of his emotions, whether these or others more serious.

This is his account of his confirmation, April 25: "We [his sister and he] were confirmed. There were about forty-five, ages from ten upwards. The Bishop delivered an address after we were confirmed. I was confirmed in the first round, Emmy

in the second. We got home and found two texts from Miss G——, who had sent them for our confirmation. Mine is, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.'" In the summer of this year he went first to Newport, then to Bethlehem among the White Hills. In the autumn we left our Chestnut Street home, and sailed from New York to Liverpool in November.

We were abroad about ten months. The first were passed in England, chiefly in Torquay and London. In both these places Willy was troubled by what we called a lameness, arising from a sprain while hanging on a banister in Chestnut Street some time before. It did not appear to be serious, though it kept him on a sofa in the London hotel for several days, and deprived him of many sights which he had promised himself. But he never complained or looked out of spirits, and got upon his feet again so soon that he gave us no opportunity to know how much he

needed treatment. The later winter and earlier spring were given to Paris, where we tried to imitate home life in an apartment, and Willy's studies went on with few interruptions. He was now intent on entering college in the autumn, and although it seemed too soon on some accounts, he was so comparatively ripe a scholar, and so very eager to be of the same class with his former school-mates, that we could not find it in our hearts to keep him back. Besides preparing himself for examination, he had time enough for French, and for a good deal of historical and scientific reading. His favorite outdoor pursuit was omnibuses. He liked to follow all the different lines, and as there are a great many in Paris, it took him a long time to travel over every one of them; but he did it, and probably became acquainted with many a part of the city unvisited by foreigners. In May he took his mother under his care, and they journeyed

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Bio —

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together as far as Florence, where they stayed with some of the dearest of their kindred, and then returned through various cities, Venice included, to Versailles, whither the rest of us had removed meanwhile. In July we went back to England, and travelled there and in Scotland until the time of the college examination drew near; then we went home, arriving in September, 1870. Not long after, we took possession of our house in Brimmer Street.

On the 1st of October Willy was admitted without conditions to the Freshman class of Harvard College. It was a bright day for him and for all who loved him. He had passed a good examination, notwithstanding all the drawbacks to his preparation for it arising from travel; he was sound in mind and body, as far as we could tell, intellectual, industrious, conscientious, very earnest to learn, very earnest to turn his learning to good uses and to be true to all his duties. It does not seem possi-

ble that among all his promising classmates, and they were very numerous, there was one who had better reason to expect a happy and an honorable college life.

His began very brightly. He had a chosen friend for a chum, and they found pleasant rooms in the house of one of the college officers, whose friendship for Willy was one of his great advantages at Cambridge. He enjoyed his studies, he enjoyed his games. Though not accomplished in any of the college sports, and not attempting an active part in many of them, he was as much devoted to them all in spirit, and got as much pleasure out of every one of them, as if he had been an athlete of the first order. He formed new friendships, of course, in which he took great satisfaction, without losing any of his old attachments. His class feeling was very strong. As his school life had been a short one, the relation between his classmates and him was comparatively novel,

and he enjoyed it in every possible aspect. No social pleasure, however, crowded out his studies. He made little exertion for the sake of rank, though he was ambitious enough, and would have been delighted to take a very high position ; but he knew that this was impossible except at great risks, both moral and physical, and he let it go. His self-control was constantly on the increase. One day his father, as a member of the Overseers' Visiting Committee, was in the room of a Freshman tutor, who described his course with his pupils, and, in illustration of it, exhibited an examination-paper, which, as he said, was written by one of the poorest scholars of the class. This bore Willy's name, and if ever his father had a surprise, it was at that moment. On talking it over with Willy, he said he thought there must be some mistake, and so his father thought ; but for several weeks he bore the shadow that had suddenly fallen upon him without

a murmur, until it was as suddenly lifted by discovering that the tutor supposed he was showing another student's paper. Not long after, Willy sought his father to confess a fault, and more than a fault, with which he was really chargeable, and the simple truth he showed, the repentance, the humility, and the trust in help from above, gave better hopes concerning him than had ever sprung from his unclouded life. Soon after, at Easter, 1871, he received his first communion.

The long vacation at the close of his Freshman year was one of his happiest periods. He had attained a very good rank as a student, and passed from work to play having nothing to interfere with his enjoyment. His family were at Beverly Farms for the summer, but he went upon one journey after another, to Easthampton, Newport, the White Hills, and Canada, partly alone and partly with his aunt. He liked independence, he liked variety, and he had both all through the summer.

His Sophomore year began with some new experiences. He and his chum moved to a college building, Holyoke, and found their quarters entirely to their mind. Societies opened to him, and though his membership was brief, it added greatly to his academic pleasures. In the sixth or seventh week of the year he got into his only college scrape by attempting to blow up a bottle partly filled with powder, in the rear of Holyoke. One of his companions being detected, he came forward to acknowledge his share in the matter, and the faculty were kind enough to let it drop. He probably paid a far more serious penalty for his frolic than any which the authorities could have inflicted. A long run from a policeman, who happened to stumble upon the party, may have caused a return of his old lameness ; at all events, he was so much troubled a few weeks later as to require medical and even surgical treatment. He continued lame, sometimes slightly, some-

times seriously, throughout the winter and spring, and must have suffered severe pain at intervals, though he never said he did. His manliness and thoughtfulness were evidently increasing, but we did not then know under what pressure of immediate pain or future apprehension. A paper dated Sunday, March 10, 1872, contains among other things the following: —

"With the help of God, I will hereafter resist the devil in body and in mind, with earnestness in prayer and resolution to overcome him whenever he assails me. I will try to lead a sober, righteous, and godly life, and to do my duty in that state of life in which it has pleased God to put me.

"I will endeavor to rise at six or seven, read my Bible before leaving my room, and to go to bed at ten in the same way.

"I will try to study three hours a day and not on Sunday.

"I will try to be meek and gentle, not quarrelsome and argumentative; not un-

courteous, not repelling, not to think so much of myself, but be as much as possible like my Saviour."

However interrupted, his pleasures continued in college and at home. No one who saw him, either habitually or occasionally, would suppose that he was contending against his infirmities. Here is a note to his mother during her absence in New York: —

"SUNDAY EVENING, *May* 5.

"We are sitting in the library at 8.30, having just finished singing hymns, in which we missed you very much. There has been a northwester all day. Papa is cutting the leaves of a book before the fire, Emmy is studying her grammar, and aunty has gone to Mrs. B——'s to pay a farewell visit. Having now learned the situation, you may imagine yourself, etc. Nothing happened at Cambridge the last week, except that papa's lecture came off with Emmy to represent the family. Dr. B—— roughed me a little [*i. e.* with some heroic remedies which even Willy could not long endure], but I have

recovered. You may care to hear that the scratch races took place yesterday. They were uneventful, save for the near capsize of a crew by a tug, and the accomplished capsize of a Freshman after he had run another boat into the river bank. Warren's benefit is to come off on Saturday, and a tribe of S——'s, W——'s, etc., are going. Ask —— how Cincinnati and the Liberal Democrats are getting on."

Twenty days later, Saturday, May 25, he took the first part of an examination for honors in Greek, watched a match game in Jarvis Field, and then came home, never to return to college but once again, and this two years afterwards, on his Class Day.

He was now not only lame but affected with severe pain from groin to foot in the right leg. The careful treatment he had received had not only failed to relieve him but had increased all his bad symptoms, or allowed them to increase. He was thin, pale, and with an expression of suffering

which he could not conceal. At first he resisted, but in a day or two he yielded, and was soon obliged to lie upon the sofa during almost all the time he was not in bed. He went out with crutches once or twice, but did not succeed in moving far. One evening he insisted on being driven to the Athenæum supper, and declared that he enjoyed it immensely, though he returned in great pain, and was very much worse on the following day. By the end of June he was pronounced to have hip-disease.

It took the course usual with those of his age. For eight months he was kept on his back, moving only his left leg and his arms, or more rarely lifting the upper part of his body, and resting upon his elbows or a bed-chair. When ordered out of town, at the beginning of August, he was transported in a litter to and from the steamboat which carried him to Nahant, and the change from his bed to the litter and back again was a painful one. It was the same

when he returned to Boston at the end of September. Then acute pain seemed to cease, and he was rather uncomfortable than suffering during most of the time. In the spring of 1873 he was very gradually prepared for leaving his bed, which he finally accomplished in April, and with the aid of splints and crutches was able to drive out in May and June. At the end of June he went to Nahant, not in a litter as the year before, but clothed and in a carriage. It seemed as if he were really beginning to be himself again, and he moved about, always with a splint and on crutches, comparatively freely, dining at one or two houses, and one afternoon trying to play croquet with his young cousins then staying at our house. Soon came fresh trouble, the splint was burdensome, movements were difficult, and as the summer advanced it was plain that he had lost rather than gained. In September he was evidently worse, and came back to town pale, feeble,

and much disordered throughout his system, as well as in his hip and limb. With new surgical treatment he appeared to regain strength, but he was once more confined to his bed, and moved about as little there as he had ever done. In midwinter he was allowed to get up once or twice a week, and go from his chamber to the library on the same floor, until able, towards the end of February, to pass several hours there, but always on the sofa or in a well-cushioned easy-chair. In March he had a second relapse, shorter but more alarming than that of the previous summer; yet from this, as from the first, he rallied, and after three months in bed, was permitted to leave it, a half-hour or an hour at a time. On the 1st of June he had the pleasure of leaving the house, and of making a long-hoped-for visit to his aunt Sarah in Brookline. The second night there he had a sharp attack, from which it took him two or three days to recover, and then the

remainder of his fortnight was without drawback. When he came home, on the 15th, he was better, to all appearances, than he had been for a year. A few days later he drove out again, this time to Cambridge for a part of his Class Day ; and from this, though it was a rainy and chilly afternoon, there were no evidently bad consequences. The following week he went to Nahant, and then, after a few days of continued well-being, his troubles returned without any reason that we could see except the one sufficient reason that his disease, never leaving him, was always liable to revive with fresh violence. This was the third relapse, and therefore more dangerous than those which preceded it. Beginning the first week of July, it continued through the summer, not without intervals of improvement, but without any real or lasting recovery. He returned home, as will be described hereafter, the middle of September, with all sorts of threatening symptoms,

under which he continued to sink for the two remaining months of his life. His illness lasted two years and almost a half from the day when he left Cambridge; almost three years from the time when he was put under treatment. Its intensity varied, as appears from this account; but its action never ceased, and when the hip or the leg was not violently affected, some other part might be. Either the disease or its consequences pressed upon him every day through all these months and years.

Such was his trial, physically; to describe it spiritually is more than even the nearest can think of doing. All the disappointments, not of one time but of several different times, when the hope of recovery came only to vanish; all the contrast between his classmates in their vigor and himself in his prostration; all the fair faces which he saw only from his pillow; all the stirrings of life which he felt, and had to repress or to forget; all the love of his

mother which he saw lavished upon him, and from which he must have often felt that he might soon be withdrawn ; all the struggles with himself, with his wayward desires and errors : these are to be suggested, without being dwelt upon, as far severer than the worst of bodily sufferings.

Whatever his trial was, he bore it cheerfully. The most vivid association with his sick-room is his smile. It never failed us. He might be weary, or in pain, but we never knew it from any sadness of countenance. Father, mother, sister, friend, or even stranger, never missed the smiling greeting which he had for them. His words were as cheerful as his face. He had names for all his family and many of his visitors, names for himself, for the things he did, for the remedies he used, for the very ills he bore ; and they were all as playful as if he had coined them in the heyday of health. He used to repeat the lines of Lovelace, changing a word to adapt them to his situation, —

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron beds a cage;"

and he might have quoted, or we might for him, the lines which follow: —

"If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty."

As time passed, he showed more rather than less cheerfulness. "At first," he once said, "I counted by months; now I count by years." After he entered the third year, he exclaimed one morning, as he was dressing his limb, "Oh, mamma, I wish I was well!" It was the first and the last time that even this moderate desire for a change of lot ever escaped his lips. There never was one word of repining. He did not lament, he did not even sigh over himself, but accepted the condition which each day brought him without a sign of resistance. What seemed still more striking to those nearest him, he never expressed the smallest feeling of envy

of those who lived as he did before being ill. The young men who came to see him would often speak of their sports, their suppers, their journeys, and in friendly tones which seemed like those of Boreas compared with the voices usually heard in the chamber; but he did not weary of listening to them, or murmur when they left him at the contrast between him and them. He delighted in his visitors. He could not have enough of them, and often said that there was but one day when he did not feel like seeing them, and that was a very sick day in the late summer of 1873. This note, which he wrote to his two fairy sisters, as he called them, shows how their visits were appreciated: —

"TUESDAY EVENING, *December* 10, 1872.
The saddest day I ever passed.

"DEAR E. AND A., — Has an earthquake or any trifle of that sort happened, or has an attack of cold or croup occurred, or the approaching Christmas, or *Scruples?* It must be scru-

ples, SCRUPLES, I fear. Monday afternoon, between 3.45 and 4.45 came four pulls at the bell. I hung on each one (with quivering accents) and though I requested —— to lie down at 3.30 to get her [*not* his mother] out of the way, not a proper bell-pull rewarded me. Tuesday afternoon was passed in alternations between feverish expectation and chills of disappointment. If Wednesday goes by in the same way, there are fears of the fever attacking the brain.

"Yours with much respect, coupled with esteem, and no retaliation, W. S. E.

"N. B. Disengaged from 10 to 10.

"Best hour for one, 11 A. M. to 2 P. M.

"Best hour for other, 2 to 5 P. M.

"Best hour for both, the whole twenty-four.

"P. S. —— lies down all day, but especially in the afternoon."

He used to call his fair young friends his "exciting visitors," and if he did not keep a diary of their calls for himself, he insisted on his mother's recording them with the

utmost exactness. He was very grateful, we were all very grateful, for the wonderful kindness he received from every friend who came to visit him, and who kept on coming, notwithstanding the length of his illness. It was a greater kindness, perhaps, than was supposed, and helped him to maintain his cheerfulness. When his father proposed to shorten the last summer at Nahant, in order to get back to the much-needed comforts of home, he said pleasantly, "If you take me to town before my friends return, so that nobody can come to see me, you 'll have to take me to Mount Auburn in a month." Of the pleasure he had to the very last in seeing his visitors, let us speak by and by.

The next most distinct recollection of his invalid life is its industry. He read from the very beginning of his illness. As soon as he was able, he studied, going over all the work of his Sophomore year, and then taking up the Junior and Senior studies.

He did this at first in the hope of returning to college, afterwards from the natural love he had for study. Beyond the college course, or that part of it which he followed, he found much to occupy him in politics, history, and literature, in all of which he gradually became well-read for his years. He took up genealogy, and followed the branches of his family, on every side, as far back as he could go, learning a good deal more about them than any of the older members knew. He resumed his music, much neglected for the last two or three years, and as he could not play upon the piano, he learned the guitar, teaching himself for many months, and then finding a master to give him lessons. He liked to have some one to work with, and often persuaded his father, oftener still, his uncle Tom to read Latin or Greek with him, not so much for instruction as for companionship. Indeed, his social tastes were as strong in study as in everything else, rendering all

the more remarkable the perseverance with which he studied alone. His stamp-books and magazines, of which he had a little library, took up many a spare moment, if he had a moment that could be called spare. "I have no time," he often declared, "to do what I want to."

He had plenty of amusements to occupy him. Whatever games could be played on a bed, or on a table beside a bed, were constantly going on: backgammon or cribbage, chess or cards. He was very fond of singing, and many an hour in the evening was spent in that way, accompanying himself on the guitar, and singing now a sentimental and now a college song. No one in another room, not knowing his condition, could imagine the laughter from his room to be that of a sick person or those around him. It was too joyous, too frequent, to be associated with sickness, even by those who knew how sick he was. Two of the family Thanksgivings were kept in his chamber.

We dined down-stairs, but as soon as dinner could be finished we went back to him, and talked, played, and laughed together, no one of the circle gayer than he. Two Christmases found him an invalid. But they were bright days, not only because of Him whom they brought near, but because of the earthly friends whose affection seemed to surpass itself. His table was laden with gifts, and as they came, one after another, the door-bell ringing, and the parcels waiting for him to open them, it was good to see how happy he could be.

None who saw him during his illness need to be told that he was not absorbed in his own affairs, as this account of him might seem to imply. However interesting his pursuits or his enjoyments, they were no more so, to say the least, than those of others. His father's labors, his mother's engagements, his sisters' walks or journeys, everything that interested his household, interested him, and he often

told us what we had better say or how we should behave ourselves in given circumstances. In all that his friends were doing, the studies and matches and races of his classmates, the parties and the charities of his young lady friends, the soberer concerns of his older visitors, the lectures or the art collections of Boston or New York or London, the elections of the United States or England, Mr. Gladstone's last speech, Mr. Longfellow's last poem, the fresh discoveries in science, the preparations for observing the transit, everything, public or private, that could stir one in the most active of careers, stirred him. He touched life at a great many points, and what he touched he seemed to understand as if his experience were as large as his sympathy.

June, 1874, was his last month of comparative well-being. He spent the first half of it, as has been mentioned, at his dear aunt's in Brookline. "Mamma and

I," he says in his diary, June 1, "started at 4.15 in a landau with cushions, guitar, etc. We had a lovely drive, as it was the first time since September that I had been out of the house. Aunt Sarah received us with open arms, and gave up the library to me, whence I looked over the lawn to the lake, and saw the long-tailed gray squirrels running about," objects in motion being naturally his favorites. Here he was in an atmosphere of tender sympathy. He saw many of those he loved best, and enjoyed the new faces that gathered round him. He rose now and then, sat on the piazza, and once took tea in the dining-room with a children's party. Notwithstanding a day or two of suffering, the visit beneath the Nutwood shades was the brightest spot in all his long illness, and he and we delighted in it together. On his way home he stopped to see his great-aunt Eliza. It was the last call he ever made, and memorable to us, not only on that account,

but because she soon went her way to the happier life.

"Wednesday, June 17th. This morning Professors Everett and Anderson came in, and said I could have my degree if I could pass my examinations. If I had known this before, I could easily have done it." So he writes in his diary, just then resumed. He did it, and, thanks to the great consideration of his examiners, he did it easily. They came to him on successive days, and on the 24th he wrote, "I heard through aunt Mary E. that I had got my degree." In the interval, he went to the afternoon exercises of Class Day, which he saw from a window in Harvard Hall. Nothing earthly, short of his recovery, could have been a greater happiness to him than this restoration to his place in his class. It seemed the beginning of his restoration to other places, and he looked, as he must have felt, like a new man. He had many warm congratulations, some of

them direct, others through his father and mother, to whom his degree was as great a happiness as to him. A few words of a note to his father from the Dean of Harvard College may stand as the representative of many cordial expressions: "I can assure you that whatever pleasure may have been given to Willy or to you by his receiving his degree with other members of his class, this cannot be greater than the satisfaction of all who have taught or known him here, that he is enrolled among the graduates of the college. I trust it will be a pleasure to him to know how kindly he is remembered, and how strong is the sympathy felt for him by his old teachers." The diary says simply, "After all this promise, I hope to give some performance and to do something. . . . Oh may I do some good in my generation, whether it be renowned or not. Sic Deus me juvet."

The day after Commencement, June

25th, he drove with his mother to Nahant, where we trusted that the hopes recently appearing would be fulfilled. "I am lying out on the piazza," he writes on the 26th; "the grass is being cut, and the smell is delicious." He was obliged to be very careful after all his late fatigues, and for a week it seemed as if he would not be the worse for them. On the 1st of July he wrote down some sentences from an article he had been reading, all expressive of submission to God, and added, "Lord, help me to fulfill Thy will, in whichever way my path lies." To us it now seems as if the God of hope were leaving him, and the God of patience and consolation coming to him that day. On the 12th, he makes his first entry about his condition: "I have been feverish all the week, and to-day have a headache."

From that day through the next two months he gradually failed. He had a fever turn almost daily, sometimes longer,

sometimes shorter, but never failing to make itself felt in some way or other. Unfavorable symptoms of various kinds appeared; his original trouble increased, and all its consequences reappeared. His previous relapses had been as great changes from a good condition — that is, a comparatively good one — to a poor one as this, but they were checked, and relief came sooner or later. There was no relief now, or none that lasted beyond a day or two, when fresh difficulties would present themselves. He was therefore disappointed as he had never been before, and all the more because the previous month had been so full of revival every way. He never left his bed. Every morning, when the weather permitted, he was rolled out upon the piazza, and there he often remained till after dark. He could not study much, though he had brought a good many books, and often tried to make use of them. He read a great deal, sometimes solidly, and

wrote rather more than he had been wont; ordered a new guitar, and played on it almost every evening; had a game of cards or of chess whenever there was an opportunity: but with all these resources, there were many hours when he was obliged to lie still and unoccupied. His visitors, especially his familiar ones, were always welcome, and he frequently asked for a tea-party, or for a friend to stay with him, even when particularly suffering. At the end of August he underwent a fresh surgical operation, which he records, and says, "I have now some hopes again of getting better soon. I do really want to say about this, and all else, 'God's will be done.'" On the 16th of September he came up to Boston, not by carriage, as he had left it, but on his bed, lifted from house to wagon, and wagon to boat, and so back again. His last days at Nahant had been very poor ones, even he admitting on one of them, "I was quite unwell to-day." Yet

such was his spirit still, that as he was driven from the boat to Brimmer Street, he insisted on stopping for a glass of soda by the way.

Two days after, September 18th, he writes as follows: "Lord, if it be acceptable unto Thee, I dedicate my soul and body to Thy service in the way that Thou choosest for me, praying Thee to draw me nearer to my Saviour, and to make me more like Him every day. I know that whatever lot Thou givest me, whether to live or die, to labor in thy Harvest, or if Thou findest me unworthy to labor as Thy minister, that lot is the best for me. . . . Send the Holy Ghost upon me to guide me when in doubt, or when thoughts that Thou knowest but I cannot express come into my mind, raised by my own vain opinion. Help me to serve Thee as Thou wouldst be served, for Jesus Christ's sake."

There was some hope of going to his

aunt Sarah's to renew the happiness of his visit in June, but an attack in the morning of the day fixed for going out of town prevented him. He writes about it in a note of the 27th: —

"Dear E. and A., — I was delighted to get your letters, coming as they did just at the time to take me out of a moderate despondency which a little unpleasantness in the state of my body had caused to arise in my mind. I am afraid I have nothing to tell you, for we have done nothing the last ten days but 1st, wait for a pleasant day; 2d, when it came, make no use of it; 3d, wait for a small recuperation; 4th, when it came, be satisfied with it. I am afraid we shall have to give up going to Nutwood, as Dr. C—— has again appeared on the scene, and says he guesses my wishes ought to be pretty strong to carry us out there, and I think they will not be strong enough to do so. Mamma went the other day to see the Montpensier pictures. Just think, they sold five hundred catalogues in two days. I am sorry this is all the return I can make for your

Nahant and North River letters, but I shall have to ask you to forgive, this time,

"Yours affectionately, W. S. E."

A week later he writes in his diary, "All last week I was very sick, but now am getting better." He seemed to improve, during the next week or ten days, and while the improvement lasted, and he possessed his average powers, the Visitation and Communion services were read in his chamber. He shall give his own account of them: "Oct. 12th. Mr. Brooks came and performed the Visitation service, and on Thursday he will administer the Holy Communion. O Lord, help me to approach Thy altar as Thou wouldst have me, in a humble, truly repentant way, giving up soul and body entirely to Thy service for my whole life. Oh make me more like my Saviour and fitter to meet Him hereafter, for His dear sake. . . . Oct. 14th. I had a talk with papa about myself, and studying for the ministry, in

case I should get well. To-morrow I am going to receive the Holy Communion. Lord, help me to receive it with a truly penitent heart and lively faith, nothing doubting. . . . Oct. 15th. To-day, at 3 o'clock, Mr. Brooks administered the Holy Communion in my room to papa, mamma, Emmy, and myself. Lord, make me worthy of this Holy Feast by making me more like my Saviour, for His sake."

He was far from giving up to his growing troubles. He not only continued to read by himself, but asked his uncle Tom to resume his readings in Greek, and began upon conversational lessons with a teacher in German. His father asked him if he was equal to these. "Do let me have them," he replied: "they are my greatest pleasure." He went through a textbook in General History, which his father brought home for examination, and marked many of the errors in it, making his criticism as good a piece of work as if he had

been well. He had been putting by some money for charity, and this he now distributed among the missionary and charitable organizations of his church. He did not forget his old interests, and sent his subscription to the boat club of the university. His last gift of all was to the fund in behalf of Hans Christian Andersen, for which he obtained other contributions than his own. When he could neither read nor write, nor even play on his guitar, he took to cutting out pictures for scrap-books, and pasting them in according to his fancy. If he could not play at solitaire, he liked to watch his mother play, as she often did to entertain him. But his spirit could not keep up so unequal a struggle, if struggle it can be called where there was such submission, and the end was seen to be near.

On the 18th of October he became much more ill. On the 20th, he took a German lesson, the last effort at study of any kind. Thenceforward he read but little besides

the Lessons and Psalms every morning, and the papers through the day. The church papers interested him more than any others, particularly during the session of the General Convention, and at his request his father subscribed for two others besides the one long taken. He still saw the friends who kindly came to him, and enjoyed to the full all the flowers, fruit, and other things which were sent him every day. His chief enjoyment was the almost daily service in his room. Besides his own rector, who came constantly, the rector of his boyhood, Bishop Doane, and his lifelong friend, Dr. Wells, read and prayed by his bedside. He did not speak freely of his condition or his feelings, yet there was no painful reserve. To his father and mother, who were the first to speak to him of what was before him, he spoke in perfect openness: "I do not mind it for myself, but I cannot bear to leave you." Then he talked of what he would yet try to be to them,

even if he were to be taken from their sight. The next day he gave his father directions about his little property, made up of a legacy from his grandmother and deposits in the savings-bank. He had drawn up, a short time before, a memorandum of his wishes that his money should go where his recent gifts had gone, to aid the charities and missions of his church. Now and then, but not often, the tears would come into his patient eyes, as he looked at his mother or sister, or listened to his father reading from the Bible or Prayer Book. One evening he asked for his guitar, and played over a few familiar airs in broken tones, the last being the hymn tune of "Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah." Then he looked at the guitar, and held it out to be replaced in its case. He was always ready to hear hymns, and sometimes to join in singing them or parts of them. As his mother and sister were repeating "Abide with me," they hesitated

for a line, and his father, just coming into the room, could not immediately give it, when his voice, clearer than it had been heard before, that day, spoke out, —

"Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?"

He had some very open conversation with one of his nurses, to whom he immediately became much attached, and for whose Christian ministrations to him we cannot be too thankful. "It seems," he said one night, "that our time together is not to be as long as I thought." "Would you rather have it longer?" "I should like to do something in the world," he answered; "I have done nothing yet." "But you have submitted to your sickness." "It is a very little thing," he said after a pause, "to bear a little pain. I wanted to do more." "Had you planned to do some greater things?" "They looked greater to me, but to do God's will is greatest." Another night Mrs. W—— read to him from the Prayer Book, and when she ceased reading, she

said, "It is a beautiful world you are going to." "Yes," he answered, "a beautiful world. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man its beauty." "And those we have been reading about?" "I could almost see them; they were very near, they seemed to be here."

In the midst of all these thoughts he continued to think of others, and of the world around him. He was much interested in the elections during the early days of November, and talked about their effect with great vivacity. His aunt Mary, who had been one of his most loving friends from his birth, came on from New York to comfort his last hours. He talked to her in the same playful way he had always done, and assumed the direction of her movements to which she had long submitted. When his father altered some of the arrangements in his room without consulting him or his mother, he sent to the

library for him, and said when he came, "Unkelly [the last name he gave his father], don't originate." His dear friends were never dearer. He would not have one of them turned away without seeing him, and on the very day before he died, he said, "I'll see every one who comes." Though he could do little more than see them, he spoke a few words. "It is always a pleasure to see you," he said to one friend. "Very kind of you to come," he said, stretching out his hand, to another. A second nurse came the last night to share the charge of him. No one noticed her as she entered the chamber, until he greeted her with a cheery "How do you do?"

That was Saturday, November 14. He had come to the end of a week of great suffering and great weakness. His physicians were giving him morphine, and the last hours of consciousness were evidently numbered. He said little during the evening or night, and in the morning it was

difficult to understand him when he spoke. It was a great comfort to us that his bright spirit should have suffered no aberration until its departure from the body was close at hand. The body itself was resting, its pains yielding to anodynes, and its want of nourishment or care suspended. All through the forenoon and the early afternoon he slept with few interruptions, and when these came he seemed to know that we were near him. At about half past three he drew up his left hand towards his head as if to lean upon it, and his face assumed an expression of heavenly peace. Half-closed eyes, smiling lips, and a breath as easy as an infant's, with perfect stillness over all his weary limbs ; so he lay, not as if sleeping, but rather as if looking into the life of heaven. It was a blessed hour to us, yet more blessed, as we believe, to him. At its close his breathing was broken, and with a few soft sighs the soul of our beloved entered into the rest of God. If it

can be said of any human being, it can be of him — "perfect through suffering."

It was half past four in the afternoon of Sunday, November 15, 1874.

He was buried on the third day, the 17th. The service was at Emmanuel Church. His kindred and friends gathered in large numbers, and his classmates bore the coffin up and down the aisle. His body was laid at Mount Auburn.

But let not the closing words of this sketch be those which tell of death or the grave. Let them rather speak of the presence which is not withdrawn; of the character from which we are not parted; of the intelligence, the fortitude, the patience, the sweet disinterestedness, the love for us and for so many beside us, that enter into our lives even more than when he was here. Then, we could not yearn for him to stay, except at the cost of his continued suffering. Now, we can long to feel him near us, without taking away one particle of his light or happiness.

"Dear Willy!" writes one of his best friends, "I can see him now, lying with the sweet, patient, cheerful face, so beautiful, so spiritual, from which every taint of earth seemed long ago to have been taken, and it seems to me that the putting off of the flesh can make little difference in the character of the new and more glorious form, for the seal was on him here." "Those traits of character," another kind friend writes, "which you have watched over ever since he was born, and have seen developed in so much beauty year after year, are still the same, but so intensified even in this short time as to go beyond our comprehension. I hope you never forget that the spiritual world has no limits, so that often he may not be far from you. I look back to his prolonged illness, to the lesson he taught me, and so many others also, of cheerful, patient submission to God's will, and I think you must feel in that room every moment as if an angel had been

there, leaving behind him a peace 'not as the world giveth,' and which you would not exchange for a thousand worlds." Yes, dear friends, these thoughts of him are not past, but present; and as they come back to us again and again, or rather as they abide with us continually, he, too, abides in the home which he has not really left, and which he will not leave while those he loved remain here to be loved still.

"God calls our loved ones, but we lose not wholly
What He hath given;
They live on earth, in thought and deed, as truly
As in His heaven."

From the Magenta, November 20, 1874.

"Those who knew well William Samuel Eliot will not soon forget the lesson of pure and elevated character, of scholarly devotion and perseverance, taught them by the unobtrusive example of his daily life; and certainly there is no member of the class of '74 who can recall without a glow of affectionate admiration the manly endurance and patience, never in one thoughtless moment laid aside, with which he bore the pain of a long and distressing illness. His tastes and habits were those of a scholar, but he had a singular loyalty for, and unselfish interest in, all that concerned the college and his fellow-students. On the last day of his college life, in May, 1872 (the day which ended for him a long struggle between love of his work and associations here on the one hand, and constantly increasing suffering on the other), he reluctantly left a match game in progress on Jarvis Field and went to his home

in Boston. Once again he was in Cambridge, when, in spite of the inclement weather and of his weakness, he came to take what part he might in the Class Day of '74, — his own Class Day. On Tuesday last his body was borne past the college yard, under the shadow of the building in which he spent the two years of his life here, and now lies almost within sound of the college bell.

"In the character of nearly every young man who, dying at an early age, gives promise of future excellence, there is an element of imperfection or of extravagance, — something to hide or to excuse. Mr. Eliot's character was wonderfully complete; his life was remarkable for its consistency and harmony. Remembering now what that life was, — that its course was straight, that it was not affected by caprice or by sin, — we feel how out of place any attempt to describe it here or to deepen its influence would be. We can only pay it the simple tribute of our affection and respect."

From the Harvard Advocate, November 27.

"The remembrance of Mr. Eliot's character will be a dear possession to all who knew him. With great purity and nobleness of character he combined those qualities which receive the warm admiration of all, and form the basis of firm and genial friendship. He was, moreover, a scholar in the highest and best sense of the term, persevering and thorough in his college work, and elegant and refined in his tastes. And when we reflect how few broad and liberal students there are, we learn how valuable must have been the example of his life."

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